

State Department's response to press inquiry from news.am

Question:

"A week ago an Armenian villager, Karen Petrosyan, 31, was taken into captivity. Shortly, after that pictures showing that Azeri soldiers did violence against him in captivity were spread by Azeri websites. Last Friday, the government of Azerbaijan informed the International Red Cross that Karen Petrosyan allegedly "got a heart attack" and died."

"Observers considered this a murder of a captive. Tom de Waal, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) called it a horrible event which needs to be investigated by international institutions. RFE's journalistic investigation shows that Petrosyan wasn't a military but simply a local peasant (please see the link below), who accidentally crossed the border.

"I was wondering if the U.S. Embassies in Yerevan and Baku follow this story on the ground. And whether the State Department have any comment about this sad incident and particularly with regard to the international investigation of captive's death."

Answer:

"The United States is deeply concerned by reports on the death of Karen Petrosyan while in Azerbaijan's custody and by allegations that his death was not due to natural causes. The United States offers its sincere condolences to Mr. Petrosyan's family.

We call on the Government of Azerbaijan to conduct a full and transparent investigation into this incident and to make its findings public. We remind the governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia of their obligations under international humanitarian law, especially their obligation to treat humanely all those taken into custody. We call on both Armenia and Azerbaijan to grant the International Committee of the Red Cross access to all detainees and internees held for conflict-related reasons."